# CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

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| **Project Name:** | Wickens Construction, Inc. |
| **Proposed Implementation Date:** | 2018 |
| **Proponent:** | Wickens Construction, Inc. |
| **Location:** | Surface and Minerals - T32N-R11E-Sec 15 (SW1/4) adjacent to the Highway 448 right-of-way. |
| **County:** | Hill |

## I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Wickens Construction, Inc. (Henceforth referred to as the proponent) has requested to conduct excavation of borrow material from the State Trust land mentioned above. This project would provide material for an adjacent emergency road repair project where flood-damaged pipe will be replaced with a larger box culvert.

## II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

### 1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

*Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.*

The proponent was previously granted a Small Volume Permit to explore for and utilize small volumes of borrow material for the local road reconstruction project. The Northeastern Land Office (NELO) conducted a field review on the project on September 11, 2018. The proponent has been in touch with the DNRC to discuss potential impacts. This action would increase the volume of removal permitted from 300 cubic yards to approximately 2,500 (the amount needed for the culvert replacement).

### 2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

Wickens Construction, Inc. will be responsible for acquiring a Limited Opencut Operation permit from the Opencut Mining Section of DEQ.

### 3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A- Allow the proponent to conduct the removal of borrow material from this parcel of State Trust Land.

Alternative B- No Action

## III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

### 4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

*Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.*

Alternative A- Site geology consists of alluvial deposits located in the England Coulee drainage bottom, Claggett Shale outcrops in the immediate mid benches rising up from the drainage bottom, and the Judith River sandstone, shale, mudstone, and siltstones surrounding the site.

Soils within the extraction area are primarily mapped as Hillon-Joplin loams, 8 to 25 percent slopes. Soils would be stripped, stockpiled, and replaced following the removal of fill material. Cumulative impacts to soil would likely be negligible.

Alternative B- No Impacts expected

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**5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:**

*Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.*

Alternative A- Excavation is proposed to be located up-slope from England Coulee. Removal of material would take place over a short period of time, with borrow material being extracted and direct-hauled to its final destination. Erosion control BMPs would be in place where appropriate, limiting the potential for sediment to be lost downslope and into England Coulee. Ground-disturbing work would be conducted during what is typically a low-precipitation time of year. A reservoir approximately 500 feet upstream and on the opposite side of highway 448 likely contains normal flow events, resulting in lower flows through the reach of England Coulee adjacent to the project area than in those upstream. Cumulative effects on water resources are likely negligible.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

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**6. AIR QUALITY:**

*What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.*

Alternative A- No significant impact expected.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

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**7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:**

*What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.*

Alternative A- There is no evidence of rare plants or cover types in the scope of the project. The vegetation at this site is normal for what is to be expected in a silty site in north-central Montana, along with dominant stands of crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristatum*). The vegetation would be removed as soil is stripped and the site would be replanted with plant species compatible with the proposed reclaimed use. No cumulative effects are anticipated.

Alternative B- No Impacts expected

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**8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:**

*Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.*

Alternative A- There may be minimal disruption to the wildlife that inhabit the area. The scale and length of the project should not be enough to permanently disrupt the wildlife species. Species in the area include whitetail and mule deer, antelope, raptors and other birds, various rodents, rabbits, reptiles and others.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

**9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:**

*Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.*

Alternative A- A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Database shows that no species of concern were noted within or near the general project area.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

**10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:**

*Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.*

Alternative A- A Class III cultural and paleontological resources inventory was conducted of much of the area of potential effect on state land in 2014. Despite a detailed examination, no cultural or fossil resources were identified in the easement corridor. No additional archaeological or paleontological investigative work is recommended. The proposed project will have *No Effect* to *Antiquities* as defined under the Montana State Antiquities Act. A formal report of findings is on file with the DNRC and the Montana State Historic Preservation Officer.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

**11. AESTHETICS:**

*Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.*

Alternative A- Very little impact should be felt aesthetically in the scope of this project. There should be minimal lasting effects on the landscape from this project. The project would only last a few weeks during the fall season as dictated by MDT project specifications.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

**12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:**

*Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.*

Alternative A- No impacts expected.

Alternative B- No Impacts expected

**13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:**

*List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.*

None known

## IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

**14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:**
*Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.*

Alternative A- Typical safety risks for laborers working with mechanized equipment would be present, but the potential risk should be minimal with proper safety efforts.

Alternative B- No Impact Expected

**15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:**
*Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.*

Alternative A- The proposed project is for replacement of a damaged culvert and would have minimal effects on industrial, commercial, and agricultural activities.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

**16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:**
*Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.*

Alternative A- This project would have minimal effects on creating, moving, or eliminating jobs.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

**17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:**
*Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.*

Alternative A- No Impacts Expected

Alternative B- No Impact

**18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:**
*Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services*

Alternative A- No Impacts Expected

Alternative B- No Impact

**19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:**
*List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.*

Alternative A- No Impact Expected

Alternative B- No Impact

**20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:**
*Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.*

Alternative A- No Impacts Expected

Alternative B- No Impact

**21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:**
*Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.*

Alternative A- No Impacts Expected

Alternative B- No Impact

**22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:**
*Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.*

Alternative A- No Impacts Expected

Alternative B- No Impact

**23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:**
*How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?*

Alternative A- No Impacts Expected

Alternative B- No Impact

**24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:**
*Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.*

Alternative A- This project will provide the trust with royalties from the borrow material taken from the site to make the proper road and culvert repairs.

Alternative B- No Impact

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| **EA Checklist Prepared By:** | **Name:** | Bryan Allison | **Date:** | September 2018 |
| | **Title:** | Mineral Resource Specialist | | |

## V. FINDING

**25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:**

Alternative A

**26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:**

The granting of the requested borrow material test pits and small volume permit on these tracts of state-owned trust lands should not result in nor cause significant negative environmental impacts. The proposed action satisfies the trusts fiduciary mandate and ensures the long-term productivity of the land. An environmental assessment checklist is the appropriate level of analysis for the proposed action

**27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

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| [ ] | EIS | [ ] | More Detailed EA | [X] | No Further Analysis |

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| **EA Checklist Approved By:** | **Name:** | Trevor Taylor |
| | **Title:** | Petroleum Engineer, Minerals Management Bureau |
| **Signature:** | Trevor Taylor | **Date:** 10/1/18 |


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| | Operator Name: Wickest Contruction Inc. | SITE MAP | Permit Area: |
| | Site Name: DNRC - G | Draft Date: 9/18/18 | Legal Description: |